

VETERANS AND HUMAN SERVICES LEVY
First Quarter 2008 Report

Introduction

In November 2005, the citizens of King County voted to approve a Veterans and Human Services Levy to respond to the needs of the county's veterans and their families, and other individuals and families in need.

The King County Executive, the Metropolitan King County Council, the volunteer members of two citizen oversight boards, veterans' organizations, housing and human services providers, and human services staff and advocates from across the county have been involved in the implementation of the Veterans and Human Services Levy.

The 2008 Adopted King County Budget (Ordinance 15975, Sections 73 and 74) approved by the King County Council in November 2007 called for quarterly reports on the progress of levy implementation. Proviso 1 of Section 73 states: *"Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended nor encumbered until the executive submits four quarterly progress reports for the veterans services levy. The quarterly reports shall include at a minimum: the amount of funding expended to date, the amount of funding contracted to date, the number and status of request for proposals to date, and any individual program statistics available, such as number of individuals served. The quarterly reports to the council are due on March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1, 2008, for council review."*

A similar proviso in Section 74 pertains to the human services levy, with identical requirements and timelines.

This First Quarter 2008 Report on the implementation of the Veterans and Human Services Levy is submitted to the King County Council per the budget provisos. It provides updates on the efforts and activities related to the levy, and includes an attachment showing the status of funds as of March 31, 2008 by levy activity (Attachment A).

Background

King County Ordinance 15279, approved in September 2005, placed before the voters a measure to create the Veterans and Human Services Levy. The ballot measure authorized King County to levy an additional regular property tax of five cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for a period of six years. The ordinance stipulated the levy proceeds would be split, with one-half dedicated to assist veterans, military personnel and their families, and the other half to help other individuals and families in need. The voters of King County overwhelmingly approved the levy in November 2005.

The county established the citizen oversight boards called for in the ordinance, and developed the Service Improvement Plan required by the King County Council to serve as the overarching

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policy and service plan for expending levy proceeds. The Service Improvement Plan was submitted to the council in September 2006 and approved the following month. The two boards, the Regional Human Services Levy Oversight Board and the Veterans Citizen Levy Oversight Board, convened in February 2007.

Service Improvement Plan

The Service Improvement Plan, approved by the King County Council through Ordinance 15632, created five overarching strategies to enhance programs and services to help veterans and their families and other low-income residents throughout the county. These overarching strategies include the following:

- Strategy One: Enhancing services and access for veterans (Veterans Levy Fund only)
- Strategy Two: Ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment
- Strategy Three: Increasing access to behavioral health services
- Strategy Four: Strengthening families at risk (Human Services Levy Fund only)
- Strategy Five: Increasing effectiveness of resource management and evaluation.

Each strategy area includes several service activities. Thirty-one activities in all, each falling under one of the above strategies, are described in the Service Improvement Plan. Staff has prepared most of the program designs or procurement plans for these activities.

Financial Status Report

The Regional Human Services Levy Oversight Board and the Veterans Citizen Levy Oversight Board have been hard at work reviewing the procurement plans and program designs for each levy activity, and incorporating feedback from the public. The boards have reviewed activity plans representing \$32.6 million (91 percent) of all available funds through the end of first quarter 2008. A total of \$25.4 million (71 percent) of all available funds have been committed by Letter of Award, Contract and/or Memorandum of Agreement and funds to expand the capacity of the King County Veterans' Program. This includes \$20.6 million (88 percent) of the funds available through the end of 2007. Several Request for Proposal (RFP) processes have been completed, with funds awarded to community agencies who are expending the awarded funds.

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King County Ordinance 15551 created two separate funds for Veterans and Human Services Levy proceeds, a Veterans Services Levy Fund and a Health and Human Services Levy Fund. Proceeds from the levy are equally split into these two funds. Attachment A provides a chart showing how each of the thirty-one individual Service Improvement Plan activities are progressing through a “pipeline” from the required board and public review, through the RFP process, and ultimately, to contracting and expenditure of the funds. Each of these activities is funded by either the Veterans Services Levy Fund or the Health and Human Services Levy Fund, or in some cases, both.

The steps in this “pipeline” include:

Step 1: Board review and public comment on the procurement plan and/or program design for each specific activity, as required by the council. The boards have reviewed twenty-three activity plans covering \$32.6 million (91 percent) of available funding.

Step 2: Request for Proposal (RFP) processes occur if community agencies will be implementing the activity. If there is to be an RFP process for the activity area, the attached spreadsheet will indicate whether it has been completed, is in process, or is scheduled for an upcoming date. In some cases, there is no RFP because the Service Improvement Plan designated a county department or program as responsible for implementing the activity, such as the Nurse Family Partnership program with Public Health-Seattle & King County.

Step 3: Actual commitment of the funds to specific community agencies or county departments, once the RFP or other review process has been completed. This commitment may occur through letters of award, contracts, or memoranda of agreement.

Step 4: Expenditure. The county pays on a reimbursement basis, so this step occurs only after the individual agencies have provided services and submitted reimbursement requests.

Attachment A provides detail on each of the 31 strategies according to the steps noted above. The first spreadsheet is a consolidated one, combining both the Veterans Services Levy Funds and the Health and Human Services Levy Funds. The next two spreadsheets show the commitments and expenditures broken out for each of the two funds, but do not repeat the information for steps one and two already captured in the consolidated report.

Program Design/Procurement Plan Review Status

By the end of first quarter 2008, staff had written and the oversight boards had reviewed twenty-three program designs or procurement plans. A brief summary of progress in each strategy area follows.

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Strategy One: Services for Veterans. Activities to expand the geographic range and increase the capacity of the King County Veterans' Program have been under way since fourth quarter 2006 and are periodically reviewed by the Veterans Citizen Levy Oversight Board. An important step in increasing service capacity was increasing funding for the King County Veterans' Program (KCVP).

According to first quarter 2008 service data, the KCVP had about 2,600 client visits, representing over 1000 unduplicated clients seeking services at the downtown and Renton sites. Of these 578 received financial assistance for such things as rent, utilities, mortgage and transportation assistance. Over 400 received vouchers for food. KCVP continues to serve a diverse population. In the first quarter, 520 were people of color.

Strategy Two: Ending Homelessness. Eight activities related to ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment are described in the Service Improvement Plan. Of these, six have been reviewed by the boards, as well as some elements of the other two activity areas. One of these is currently being reviewed by the boards. By the end of the first quarter, seven RFPs for housing and supportive services have been completed. Two RFPs, one related to linking educational and employment services to supportive housing, and the other related to permanent housing placement supports for parents with young children and a criminal justice history are currently in process.

Sound Mental Health (SMH) operates the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Program, a community-based program targeted at the highest utilizers of the King County Jail who have severe and persistent mental illness, are likely to be homeless, and have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. The FACT program, with a capacity of 50 participants, includes housing placement arranged with the assistance of the Seattle and King County housing authorities. The voluntary program provides comprehensive, individualized assistance and services that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist participants in their journey toward recovery in the community. The FACT program was implemented in late January 2008. In the first quarter of 2008, SMH worked with 15 eligible individuals, hoping to enroll them in the program.

Strategy Three: Behavioral Health Services. All four activities related to increasing access to behavioral health services have been reviewed by the boards. An RFP and Request for Investment (RFI) for two of these activities took place in first quarter 2008. Awards will be announced in second quarter 2008.

The City of Seattle received funding to expand PEARLS services, an in-home service providing treatment for mild depression in elderly veterans and other seniors which it has provided throughout the county for several years. According to their first quarter data, twenty individuals, many more than had been anticipated, were interviewed by PEARLS counselors and twelve clients enrolled. Fifty percent of these PEARLS clients were from communities of color.

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Request for Proposals related to developing training programs in trauma, and training behavioral health providers to use evidence-based practices for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder will take place in second quarter 2008.

Strategy Four: Strengthening Families. Six activities were described in the Service Improvement Plan related to strengthening families, and plans for all six have been reviewed by the boards. The two remaining RFPs to be conducted, one related to maternal depression and the other to education and employment for parents exiting the criminal justice system, are currently underway. Results are expected to be announced next quarter.

Another activity, Expansion of Nurse Family Partnership (a program operated by Public Health-Seattle & King County) is currently underway. Fifty-nine clients have been served in 155 visits by the increased capacity created by levy funding. (Overall the program served 438 individuals in 1,698 visits.) Thirty-two of the 59 clients seen in the first quarter have been enrolled in the program and live throughout the county:

Auburn	2	SeaTac	1
Federal Way	6	Seattle	9
Homeless	1	Shoreline	2
Kent	7	Tukwila	1
Renton	2	Vashon	1

Strategy Five: Resource Management and Evaluation. The Service Improvement Plan identified nine activities under this strategy, four of which have been reviewed by the levy boards. The primary focus of Strategy Five is evaluating levy program performance, increasing the quality and coordinated use of information systems to improve services, and coordinated regional planning efforts.

One activity of particular importance is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – Safe Harbors. The Safe Harbors Procurement Plan was approved first quarter 2008 – allocating \$350,000 in 2008 to provide direct support services as agencies transition to the next generation HMIS application. The enhanced HMIS will function as an integral part of agencies management, and improve agency capacity to participate in regional services coordination. Program level training and technical assistance will also be provided through this project. Clients of over 170 programs in the region will be linked through the new system. A significant number of levy projects will rely on Safe Harbors to demonstrate program performance.